

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2007

Ann M. Veneman
Executive Director
UNICEF
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
U.S.A.

Manuel Manrique
UNICEF Guatemala Representative
Apartado Postal 525
Guatemala City
Guatemala, Central America

Dear Ms. Veneman and Sr. Manrique:

As Members of the United States Congress, we are committed to eliminating the barriers that hinder all children from their basic right to a permanent loving family.

We understand that UNICEF has played a crucial role in Guatemala's efforts to reform their intercountry adoption process. We ask for your continued assistance in protecting the children of Guatemala.

We have learned of Guatemala's recent decision to require all adoption cases to meet Hague standards as of January 1, 2008, and to stop all processing of adoption cases with non-Hague countries, including the United States until such a system can be implemented. While we support Guatemala's efforts to reform their intercountry adoption process and applaud their commitment to the Hague Convention, we are concerned that this action may cause unnecessary harm to Guatemala's orphaned and vulnerable children.

At present, 370,000 Guatemalan children do not have a permanent and loving family. The suspension of all intercountry adoptions, combined with the lack of a Hague process within Guatemala, will force over 3,000 children legally relinquished by their birthparents and properly referred to potential adoptive parents, to remain outside of permanent family care indefinitely. As we have learned from our own experience, the implementation of a high-quality, efficient Hague process can take years. To leave children without the benefit of a permanent home for this length of time can have long-term physical and emotional consequences. It is not in the best interest of these children. Furthermore, because the current system of care is not publicly financed, many of these children may be left without the food, care, and shelter they need to survive.

We commend your efforts to support Guatemala's transition toward a Hague compliant system. We share your goal to see that all Guatemalan children and their birth parents are protected from exploitation. We believe that this goal could be better achieved by

providing an interim measure for pending adoption applications. We understand that you have informed the Guatemalan government of your support for the proposed amendment to Article 52 of bill 3217 regarding the transition cases. We encourage your public support for an interim plan to allow the current law to be applied to adoption applications for children whose parental rights have been legally relinquished or terminated and filed before January 1, 2008. This approach would not only allow for sufficient time to implement a long-term solution, but such a plan would also ensure that orphaned children do not remain outside the care of a family for many years.

Again, we applaud your advocacy for the best interests of Guatemalan children. We also support Guatemala's efforts to protect their children with the full implementation of the Hague Treaty. We believe that this treaty will ultimately serve as the foundation for a system of international adoption that is both transparent and efficient. In moving toward this goal, we must never lose sight of the treaty's overall purpose, as stated in the opening line of the Hague Convention: *Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.*

The suspension of pending adoption applications will prevent thousands of children from gaining permanency. We therefore respectfully request that UNICEF join the Hague Permanent Bureau and the United States Department of State in publicly supporting the processing of pending adoption applications under current law or an appropriate interim method, which will allow for a smooth, timely, and transparent transition to the Hague Convention for Guatemalan children and their future families.

Thank you for your concern and work to protect the best interests of the children in Guatemala.

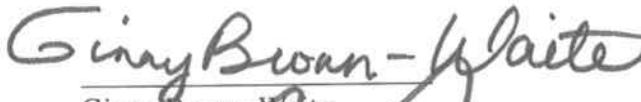
Sincerely,



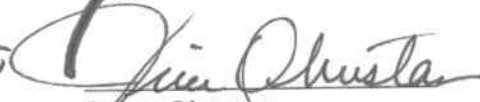
Norm Coleman
United States Senator



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



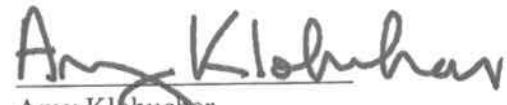
Ginny Brown-Waite
Member of Congress



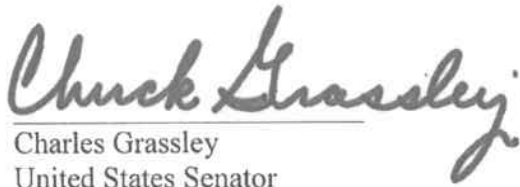
James Oberstar
Member of Congress



Pat Roberts
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

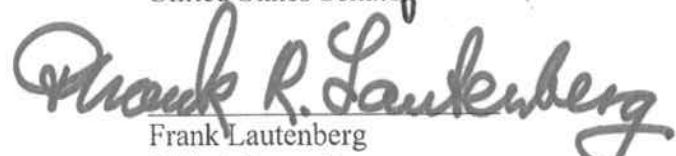

Charles Grassley
United States Senator


Tim Johnson
United States Senator


Sam Brownback
United States Senator


Robert Byrd
United States Senator


Jim Bunning
United States Senator


Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator

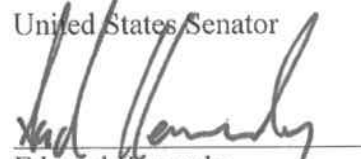

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


John Rockefeller
United States Senator


Barack Obama
United States Senator

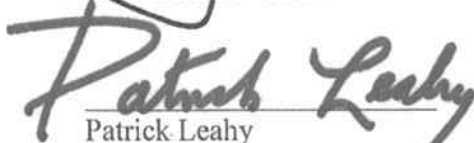

Blanche Lincoln
United States Senator

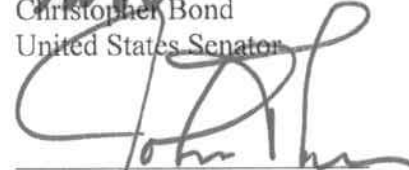

Wayne Allard
United States Senator


Edward Kennedy
United States Senator


John Warner
United States Senator


Christopher Bond
United States Senator


Patrick Leahy
United States Senator


John Thune
United States Senator


Mel Martinez
United States Senator

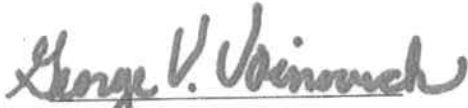

Robert Casey
United States Senator



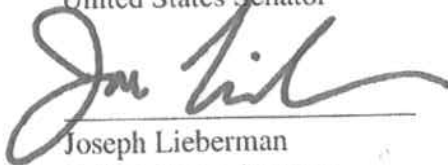
Richard Durbin
United States Senator



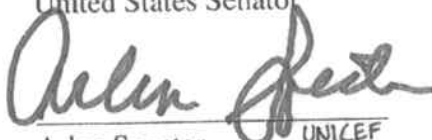
Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator



George Voinovich
United States Senator

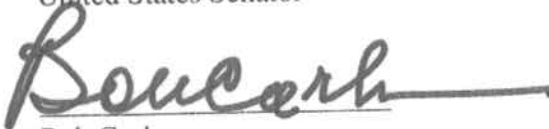


Joseph Lieberman
United States Senator

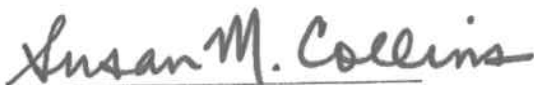


Arlen Specter
United States Senator

UNICEF
GUATEMALA



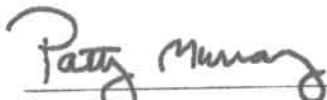
Bob Corker
United States Senator



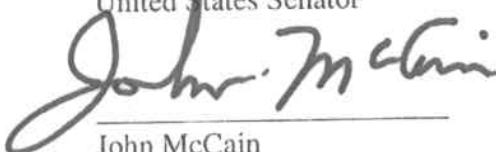
Susan Collins
United States Senator




Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



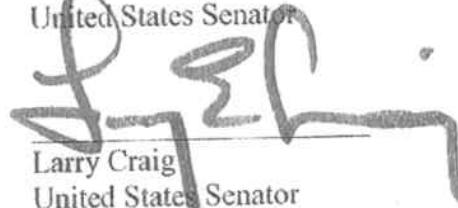
Patty Murray
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator



Charles Schumer
United States Senator



Larry Craig
United States Senator



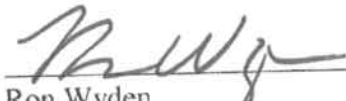
Kent Conrad
United States Senator



Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator



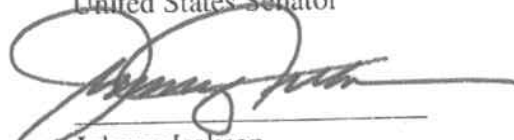
Jack Reed
United States Senator



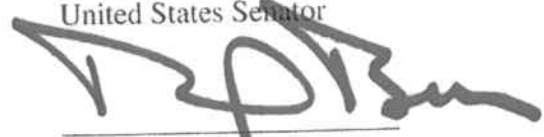
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



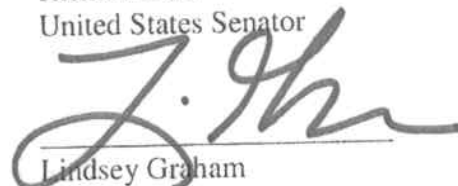
Robert Bennett
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator



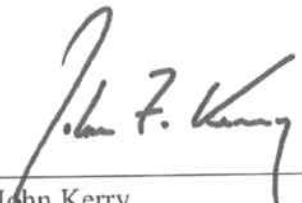
Lindsey Graham
United States Senator

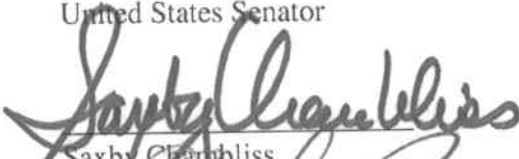
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Dodd", written over a horizontal line.

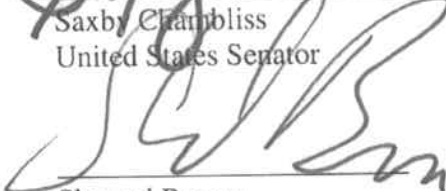
Christopher Dodd
United States Senator


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Sununu", written over a horizontal line.

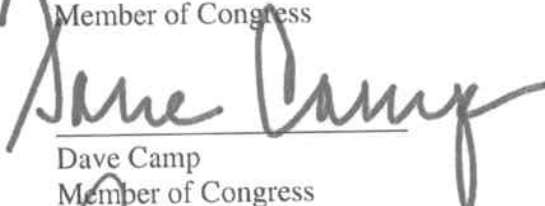
John Sununu
United States Senator

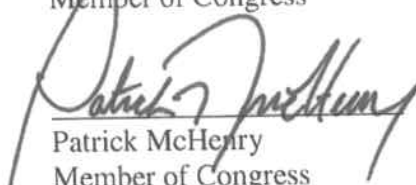

John Kerry
United States Senator

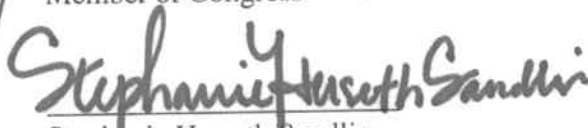

Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Todd Akin
Member of Congress


Dave Camp
Member of Congress


Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress


Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
Member of Congress

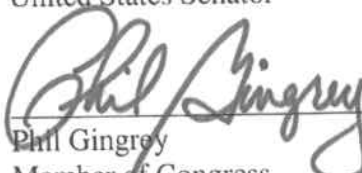

David Scott
Member of Congress

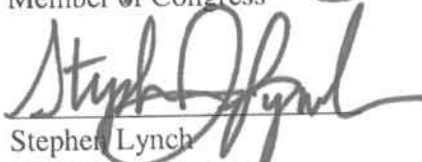

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

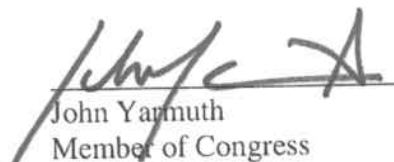

Gordon Smith
United States Senator



James Inhofe
United States Senator

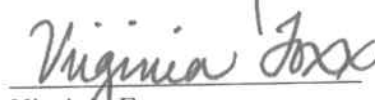

Carl Levin
United States Senator

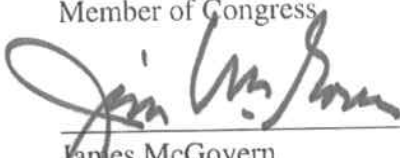

Phil Gingrey
Member of Congress


Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress


John Yarmuth
Member of Congress


Mike Doyle
Member of Congress


Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

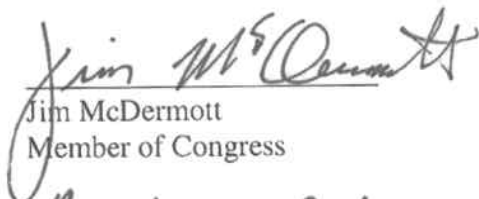

James McGovern
Member of Congress



David Davis
Member of Congress



Todd Platts
Member of Congress



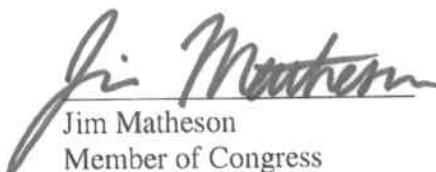
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



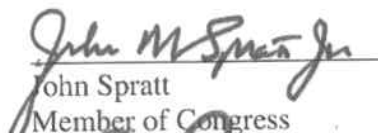
Barbara Cubin
Member of Congress



Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress



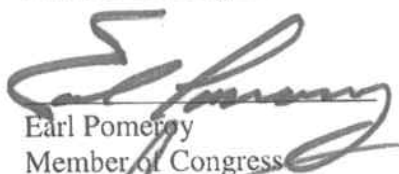
Jim Matheson
Member of Congress



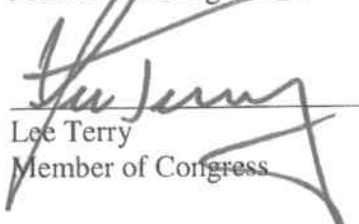
John Spratt
Member of Congress



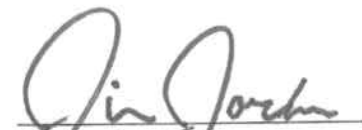
John Kline
Member of Congress



Earl Pomeroy
Member of Congress



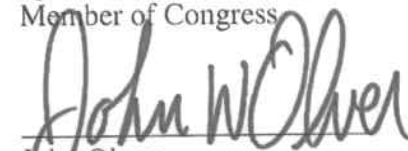
Lee Terry
Member of Congress



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



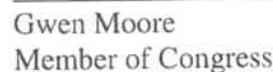
Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



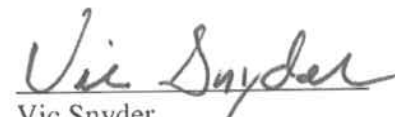
John Olver
Member of Congress



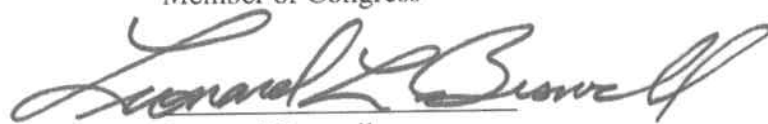
Thomas Tancredo
Member of Congress



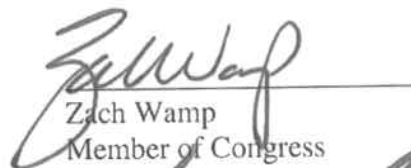
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



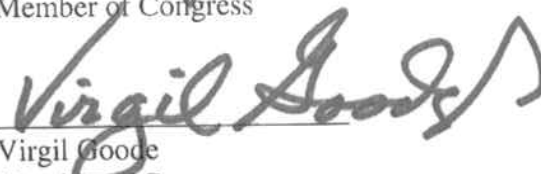
Vic Snyder
Member of Congress



Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress



Zach Wamp
Member of Congress



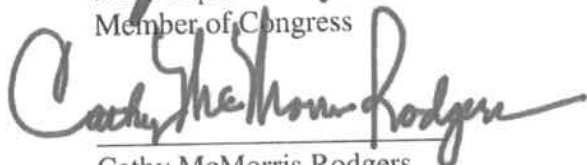
Virgil Goode
Member of Congress



Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



Jim Cooper
Member of Congress



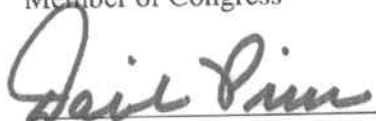
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



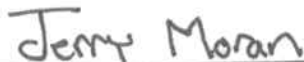
Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



David Price
Member of Congress



Jerry Moran
Member of Congress



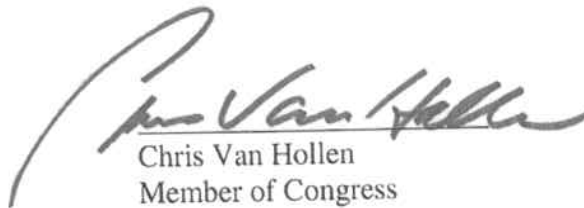
Jim Saxton
Member of Congress



Peter Hoekstra
Member of Congress



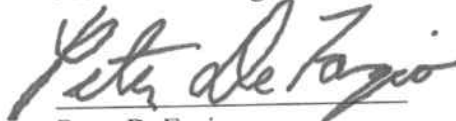
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



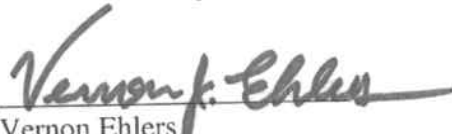
Dennis Moore
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Danny Davis
Member of Congress



Vernon Ehlers
Member of Congress



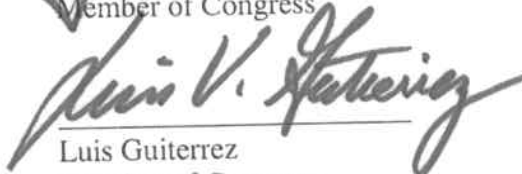
Michael McNulty
Member of Congress



Howard Berman
Member of Congress



Jim Moran
Member of Congress



Luis Guterrez
Member of Congress



Phil Hare
Member of Congress



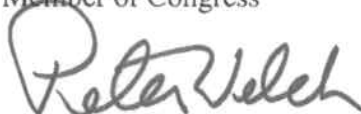
Thomas Allen
Member of Congress



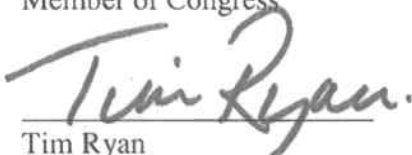
John Hall
Member of Congress



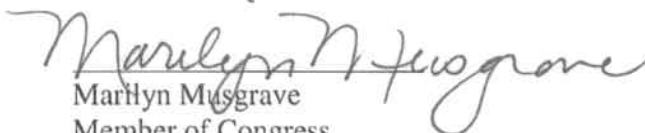
Scott Garrett
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



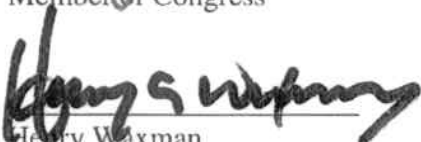
Marlyn Musgrave
Member of Congress



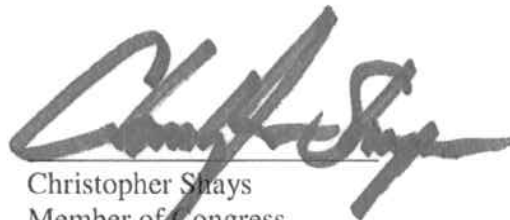
Tim Walz
Member of Congress



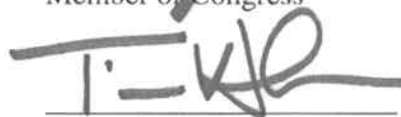
Nancy Boyda
Member of Congress




Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



Christopher Shays
Member of Congress



Timothy Johnson
Member of Congress



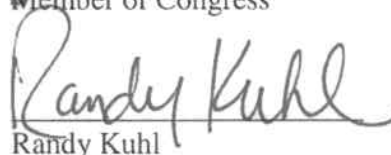
Michael Castle
Member of Congress



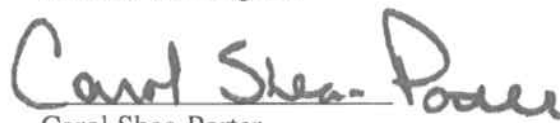
Rahm Emanuel
Member of Congress



Jason Altmire
Member of Congress



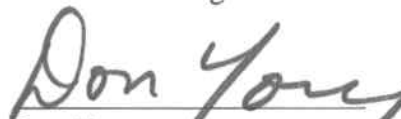
Randy Kuhl
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



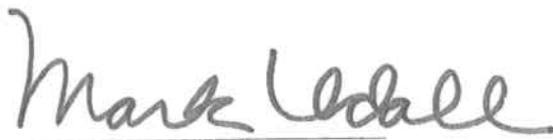
Thaddeus McCotter
Member of Congress



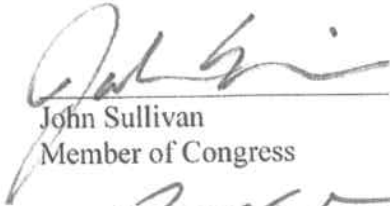
Don Young
Member of Congress



Rodney Frelinghuysen
Member of Congress



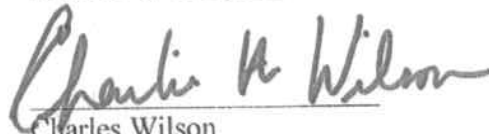
Mark Udall
Member of Congress



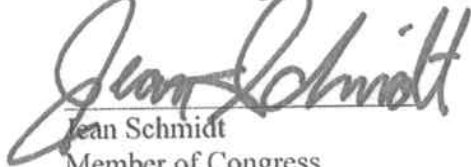
John Sullivan
Member of Congress



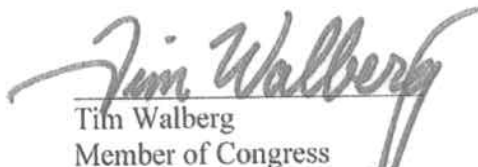
Darrell Issa
Member of Congress



Charles Wilson
Member of Congress



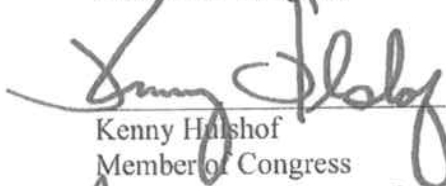
Jean Schmidt
Member of Congress



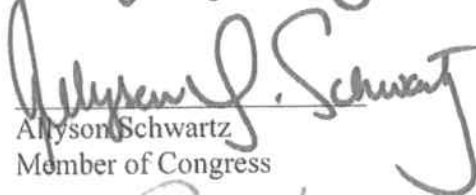
Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Richard Baker
Member of Congress



Kenny Hulshof
Member of Congress



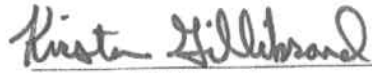
Allyson Schwartz
Member of Congress



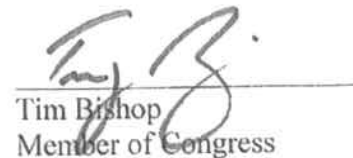
Mark Kirk
Member of Congress



James Langevin
Member of Congress



Kirsten Gillibrand
Member of Congress



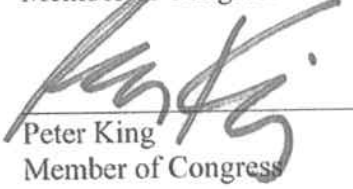
Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



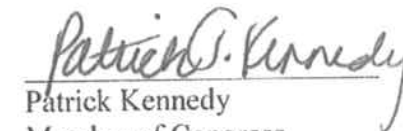
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



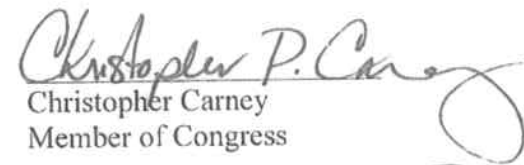
Frank Wolf
Member of Congress



Peter King
Member of Congress



Patrick Kennedy
Member of Congress



Christopher Carney
Member of Congress



Heath Shuler
Member of Congress





Geoff Davis
Member of Congress



Edward Whitfield
Member of Congress



Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress

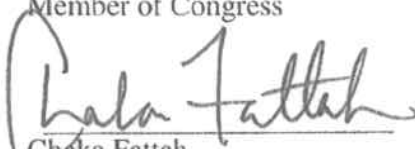
John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Albert Wynn
Member of Congress



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



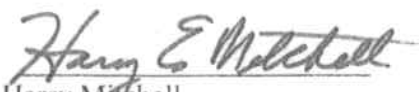
Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress



Bart Stupak
Member of Congress



Tim Holden
Member of Congress



Harry Mitchell
Member of Congress



Ron Lewis
Member of Congress



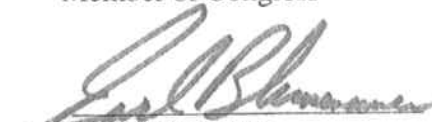
James Sensenbrenner
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell
Member of Congress



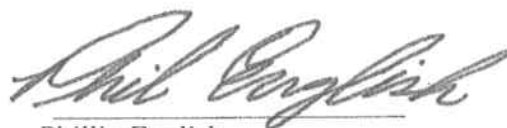
Mark Souder
Member of Congress



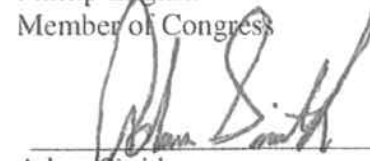
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



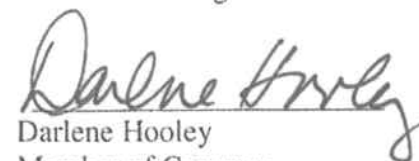
Alan Mollohan
Member of Congress



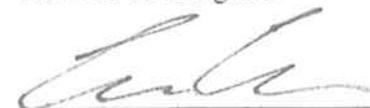
Phillip English
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



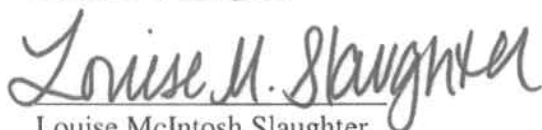
Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress



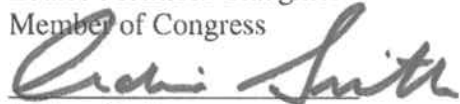
Chris Cannon
Member of Congress



Julia Carson
Member of Congress



Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress




Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



Ben Chandler
Member of Congress



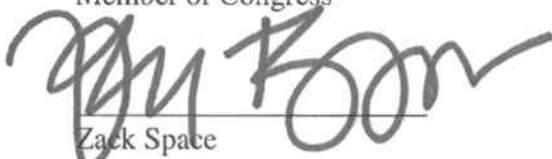
Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



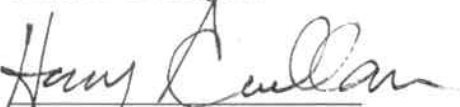
Michael Arcuri
Member of Congress



Charles Dent
Member of Congress



Zack Space
Member of Congress



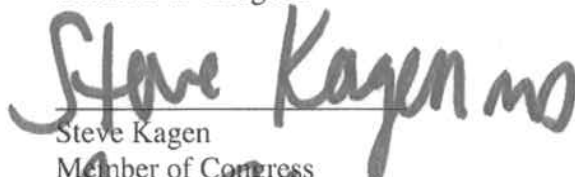
Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress




Ed Pastor
Member of Congress



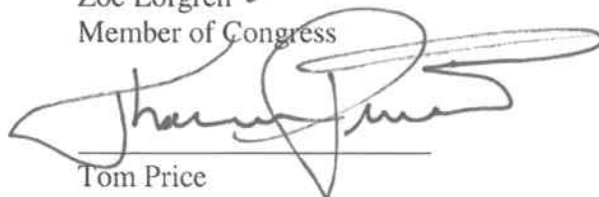
Steve Kagen
Member of Congress



Chris Murphy
Member of Congress



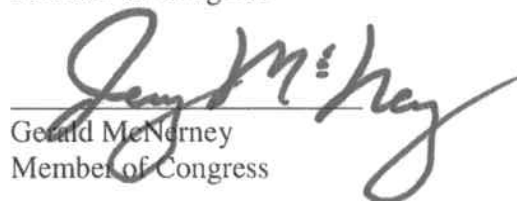
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



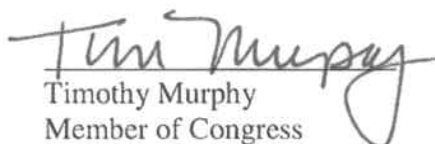
Tom Price
Member of Congress



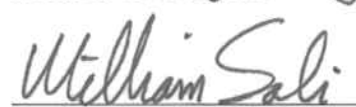
Stephen Cohen
Member of Congress



Gerald McEnerney
Member of Congress



Timothy Murphy
Member of Congress



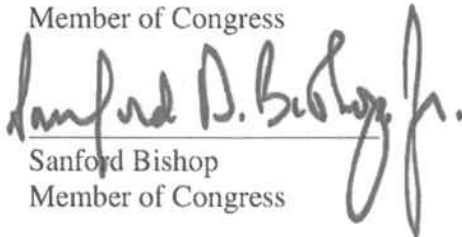
William Sali
Member of Congress



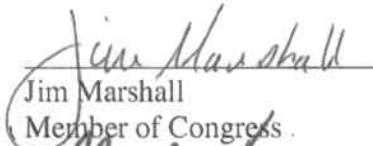
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



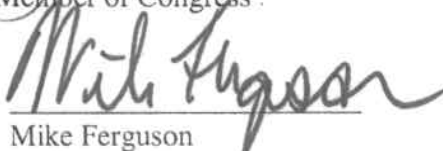
Brad Miller
Member of Congress



Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress



Jim Marshall
Member of Congress



Mike Ferguson
Member of Congress



John Tierney
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Michael McCaul
Member of Congress